# Teacher strategies for Making Accommodations for Multicultural Learners

## ADAPTING MATERIALS

-Enlarging print
-Condensing information
-Using visuals
-Using acetate sheets on textbook with felt pens
-Lined paper/graph paper
-Raised or NCR paper
-Taping material
-Highlighting instructions
-Photocopying notes
-Highlighting text
-Computer for response to worksheets
-Concrete objects or stamps to make answer on worksheet
-Video taping
-Different colored pens
-Reading material on same topic but different readability
-Task cards and written instruction
-Oral presentation of tests
-Computer worksheet set-up for clarity
-Bold face and underline key words
-Teach study strategies to approach materials
-Dycem pads ( a non-slip material that prevents movement between surfaces
-Velcro

## ADAPTING ENVIRONMENT

-Change seating plans
-Cooperative learning
-Peer grouping
-Using visual/audio aids
-Move outside the classroom for "real" experiences
-Hands on concrete materials .
-Study carrels/cloakroom/quiet time place
-Pencils/organizers
-Have student come in 10 minutes early to go over day plan with an assistant or peer
-Post day plan on board or on desk
-Allow more space when needed-Sack table
-Attach pencil to desk
-Attach pencil to student with extension key ring
-Room dividers
-Colored paper on walls with instructions -Sitting alone or with buddy
-Limit noise from hallways, classrooms, or increase noise
-Using headphones as earplugs to cut out noise
-Reduce stimulation in the room

## ADAPTING EVALUATION

-Evaluate on goals set for child
-Give different ways to give answer-written, oral, drawn
-Let student use aids-calculator, tape recorder, computer, bingo markers
-Self evaluation
-Group evaluation
-Step by step evaluation
-Process evaluation
-Anecdotal records
-Peer evaluation/cooperative learning group
-Parent evaluation
-Oral evaluation
-Concept maps-Mark on effort
-Collection of work samples over time
-Mark on improvement shown
-Video evaluation
-Checklist evaluation

**A Guide for Teaching Diverse Learners**

Adapted from Manning, M.L. & Baruth, L. G.(2000). *Multicultural Education of Children and Adolescents.* Needham Heights, MA: Ally and Bacon

**African American Learners:**

1. Be open and honest in relationships with African American children.
2. Learn as much as possible about your own culture.
3. Seek to respect and appreciate culturally different attitudes and behaviors.
4. Take advantage of all available opportunities to participate in activities in the African American community.
5. Keep in mind that African American children are members of their unique cultural group and are unique individuals as well.
6. Eliminate all behaviors that suggest prejudice or racism.
7. Implement practices that acknowledge the African American culture.
8. Hold high expectations of African American children, and encourage all who work with African American children to do likewise.
9. Ask questions about the African American culture.
10. Develop culture-specific strategies, mechanisms, techniques, and programs to foster the psychological development of African American children (Locke, 1989)

**Middle East Learners:**

1. Represent the Middle East, Arabs and Muslims accurately, and fairly.
2. Ensure that Arab American students are treated equitably.
3. Respect the customs of the native culture and religion.
4. Family life and harmony are crucial to Arabs demonstrate respect for nuclear family.
5. Be sensitive to public criticism of Arab students minimize loss of "face".

**Native American Learners:**

1. In contrast to people in other cultures, Native Americans often harbor significant feelings of suspicion and distrust of professionals and institutions and especially of European Americans.
2. Communication problems may result in an inability to understand, trust, and build rapport with peers and professionals of other cultures. Differences in "home language" and "school language" or Native Americans' nonverbal communication might hinder educational efforts. Native American learners may appear to be unconcerned with educational progress when, in fact, they may be painfully shy and over sensitive to strangers because of language problems and mistrust of European Americans.
3. Native American adolescents develop in an often unique and difficult situation. They must reconcile allegiance to the values of their culture.
4. Native American learners have to decide whether the Native American or European American culture (or some "cultural combination") should provide the basis for the identity. They need to attempt proficiency in both the Native American language and English and learn how to maintain harmony with family and nature while surviving in the European American world. They also face the problem of how to accept the vast cultural differences in situations in which the European American is unlikely to attempt cross-cultural understandings or acceptance.
5. Understand that learners working slowly, looking unconcerned or unmotivated, and being at ease during supposedly hectic times are not signs of disinterest; instead, Native American learners might be very motivated and interested but do not show traditional middle-class indicators of motivation and interest.
6. Give an impression of being unhurried and at ease when dealing with Native American learners, who do not want to feel they are imposing on others or are consuming their time (Nel, 1994).

**Hispanic American Learners**

1. Provide an educational environment in which Hispanic American children and adolescents feel that educators and other significant adults and peers respect their Spanish culture and background.
2. Allow Spanish to be spoken in schools, because it is the language spoken at home and in the neighborhoods, although learners should be taught to speak English.
3. Understand that language problems and differences are partly responsible for most academic problems.
4. Consider differences in learning styles when planning and implementing education programs.
5. Promote positive feelings toward learners' selves and their culture, because learners' self-esteem and cultural identities influence school achievement and social development.
6. Understand and appreciate cultural diversity to the degree that Hispanic learners do not feel their culture, socioeconomic class, families, religion, and language are wrong or inferior.
7. Use utmost caution not to label Hispanic learners on a basis of myth, stereotypes, prejudices, racism, or any other form of discrimination.
8. Use test data carefully, and remember that achievement tests, intelligence tests, and other measurement instruments might have a cultural bias toward European American standards and cultural expectations.

**Asian American learners**

1. Avoid reprimanding or disciplining the Asian American learner in front of peers. Having one's name written on the blackboard or on other public displays may be far more damaging to the Asian child than to the European American child (West, 1983).
2. Avoid thinking that all Asian Americans are high achievers who reach excellence in all academic areas and who model impeccable behavior.
3. Help the Asian American family to understand the U.S. school system and its expectations of learners and their families. Also, try to understand how the Asian family perceives teachers; that is with high respect. As the teacher learns the family's respect, the teacher gains its assistance and support.
4. Understand that behavior (at least to European American teachers) that may seem to indicate indifference or lack of interest (for example, looking the other way or not volunteering to answer) is appropriate for Asian learners. For example, Asian culture teaches learners to listen more than they speak and to speak in a well-modulated voice.
5. Other culturally specific traits that a teacher should understand include: Asian American learners may be modest in dress; girls might be quieter than boys; girl might not want to reveal their legs during physical education activities; and problems might result when assigning girls and boys as cooperative learning partners (West, 1983).

**European American Learners:**

1. perceive educational situations (e.g., competition and demonstration of motivation) differently.
2. perceive the world differently, such as focusing on the whole rather than the parts; or
3. prefer to learn using visual, perceptual, and spatial modes rather than words.

**High and Low Context**

http://www.culture-at-work.com/highlow.html

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The general terms "high context" and "low context" (popularized by Edward Hall) are used to describe broad-brush cultural differences between societies.

High context refers to societies or groups where people have close connections over a long period of time. Many aspects of cultural behavior are not made explicit because most members know what to do and what to think from years of interaction with each other. Your family is probably an example of a high context environment.

Low context refers to societies where people tend to have many connections but of shorter duration or for some specific reason. In these societies, cultural behavior and beliefs may need to be spelled out explicitly so that those coming into the cultural environment know how to behave.

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**High Context** (East Asian, Arab, Southern European, Native American, Mexican, Portions of rural US)

- Less verbally explicit communication, less written/formal information
- More internalized understandings of what is communicated
- Multiple cross-cutting ties and intersections with others
- Long term relationships
- Strong boundaries- who is accepted as belonging vs who is considered an "outsider"
- Knowledge is situational, relational.
- Decisions and activities focus around personal face-to-face relationships, often around a central person who has authority.

**Examples:** Small religious congregations, a party with friends, family gatherings, expensive gourmet restaurants and neighborhood restaurants with a regular clientele, undergraduate on-campus friendships, regular pick-up games, hosting a friend in your home overnight.

**Low Context** ( US Germany, Scandinavia)

- Rule oriented, people play by external rules
- More knowledge is codified, public, external, and accessible.
- Sequencing, separation--of time, of space, of activities, of relationships
- More interpersonal connections of shorter duration
- Knowledge is more often transferable
- Task-centered. Decisions and activities focus around what needs to be done, division of responsibilities.

**Examples:** Large US airports, a chain supermarket, a cafeteria, a convenience store, sports where rules are clearly laid out, a motel.

While these terms are sometimes useful in describing some aspects of a culture, one can never say a culture is "high" or "low" because societies all contain both modes. "High" and "low" are therefore less relevant as a description of a whole people, and more useful to describe and understand particular situations and environments.

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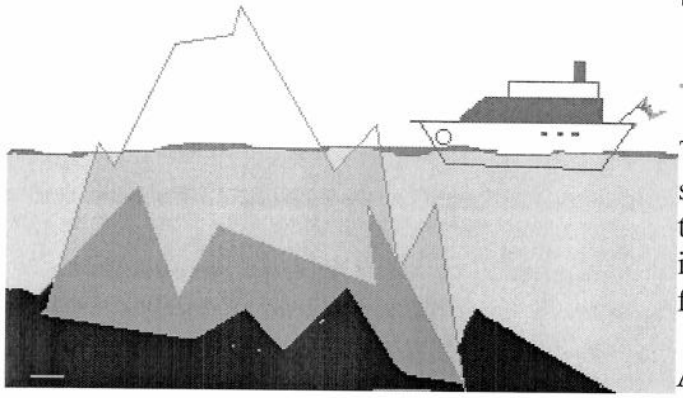
## Ways that High and Low Context Differ

1. The Structure of Relationships
    - **High:**Dense, intersecting networks and long-term relationships, strong boundaries, relationship more important than task
    - **Low:** Loose, wide networks, shorter term, compartmentalized relationships, task more important than relationship
2. Main Type of Cultural Knowledge
    - **High**: More knowledge is below the waterline--implicit, patterns that are not fully conscious, hard to explain even if you are a member of that culture
    - **Low:** More knowledge is above the waterline--explicit, consciously organized



# The Iceberg Metaphor

The Iceberg metaphor for culture shows a cruise ship sailing close to the iceberg for a look at this foreign territory. Part of the iceberg is immediately visible; part of it emerges and submerges with the tides, and its foundations go deep beneath the surface.

### Above water line:

Aspects of culture that are explicit, visible, taught. This includes written explanations, as well as those thousands of skills and information conveyed through formal lessons, such as manners or computing long division or baking bread. Also above water are the tangible aspects: from the "cultural markers" tourists seek out such as French bread or Guatemalan weaving, to the conformity in how people dress, the way they pronounce the letter "R", how they season their food, the way they expect and office to be furnished.

### At the water line:

The transition zone is where the cultural observer has to be more alert: "now you see it now you don't", the area where implicit understandings become talked about, explained--mystical experiences are codified into a creed; the area where official explanations and teachings become irrational, contradictory, inexplicable--where theology becomes faith.

### Below the water line:

"Hidden" culture: the habits, assumptions, understandings, values, judgments ... that we know but do not or cannot articulate. Usually these aspects are not taught directly. Think about mealtime, for example, and the order you eat foods at dinner: Do you end with dessert? With a pickle? With tea? Nuts and cheese? Just have one course with no concluding dish? Or, in these modern times, do you dispense with a sit-down meal altogether? Or consider how you know if someone is treating you in a friendly manner: do they shake hands? keep a respectful distance with downcast eyes? leap up and hug you? address you by your full name? These sorts of daily rules are learned by osmosis -- you may know what tastes "right" or when you're treated "right", but because these judgments are under-the-waterline, it usually doesn't occur to you to question or explain those feelings.

## How to Analyze Books for Racism and Sexism

Taken from: Manning, M.L. & Baruth,, L.G. (2000). *Multicultural Education of Children and Adolescents.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

These guidelines are a starting point and are designed to help educators detect racist and sexist bias in children's story books, picture books, primers, and fiction.

1. **Check the illustrations**. Look for stereotypes, oversimplified generalizations about a particular group, race, or sex that generally carry derogatory implications. Look for variations that in any way demean or ridicule characters because of their race or sex. Look for tokenism. If there are culturally diverse characters, are they just like Anglo Americans, but tinted or colored? Do all culturally diverse faces look stereotypically alike, or are they depicted as genuine individuals?

Look at the lifestyles of the people in the book. Are culturally diverse characters and their settings depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with an unstated norm of Anglo American middle-class suburbia? For example, culturally diverse people are often associated with the ghetto, migrant labor, or "primitive" living. If the story does attempt to depict another culture, does it go beyond oversimplifications of reality to offer genuine insights into another lifestyle?

2. **Check the story line**. Civil rights legislation has led publishers to weed out many insulting passages and illustrations, particularly in stories with black themes, but the attitudes still find expression in less obvious ways. The following checklist suggests some of the various subtle forms of bias to watch for:

*Relationships*: Do Anglo Americans in the story have the power and make the decisions? Do culturally diverse people function in essentially subservient roles?

*Standard for success:* What does it take for a character to succeed? To gain acceptance, do culturally diverse characters have to exhibit superior qualities—excel in sports, get A's, and so forth?

*Viewpoint:* How are "problems" presented, conceived, and resolved in the story? Are culturally diverse people themselves considered to be "the problem"? Do solutions ultimately depend on the benevolence of an Anglo American?

*Sexism*: Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or is their success due to their good looks or to their relationships with boys? Are sex roles incidental or paramount to characterization and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

3. **Consider the effects of the book on the child's self-image and self-esteem**. Are norms established that limit the child's aspirations and self-esteem? What does it do to African American children to be continuously bombarded with images of white as beautiful, clean, and virtuous, and black as evil, dirty, and menacing? What happens to a girl's aspirations when she reads that boys perform all the brave and important deeds? What about a girl's self-esteem if she is not fair of skin and slim of body?

4. **Consider the author's or illustrator's qualifications**. Read the biographical material on the jacket flap or on the back cover. If a story deals with a culturally diverse theme, what qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with this topic? If they are not members of the culturally diverse group being written about, is there anything in the author's or illustrator's background that would specifically recommend them for this book?

Similarly, a book that has to do with the feelings and insights of women should be more carefully examined if it is written by a man, unless the book's avowed purpose is to present a male viewpoint. These observations do not deny the ability of writers to empathize with experiences other than those of their own sex or race, but the chances of their writing as honestly and as authentically about the experiences of other genders and races are not as good.

5. **Look at the copyright date.** Books on culturally diverse themes—usually hastily conceived—suddenly began appearing in the mid-1960s. There followed a growing number of "culturally diverse experience" books to meet the new market demand, but they were still written by Anglo American authors and reflected an Anglo point of view. Only in the late 1960s and early 1970s did the children's book world begin to even remotely reflect the realities of a multiracial society, and it has only just begun to reflect feminist concerns.